

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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*Published by the Commission on Public Relations
of the National Christian Council of Japan*

CABLE CODE: JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS: CHRISTIAN CENTER, 2-4-CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates: Japan ¥ 700, Foreign (Sea mail) \$ 2.00, (Air mail) \$ 3.50.

No. 324

June 10, 1968

JAPAN SENDS TWO MISSIONARIES INTO U.S. CITIES' CRISIS

Responding to the request from overseas in America's "Crisis in the Nation," two Japanese left Haneda Saturday, June 8, to report for assignment for ministry in metropolitan areas of the United States.

The two persons being sent by The United Church of Christ in Japan are Mrs. Umeko Kagawa Momii and Rev. Akira Nishihara. Mrs. Momii is director of The Pillar of Cloud Foundation, which is continuing the work begun by Toyohiko Kagawa, and a member of the Commission on Ecumenical Ministries of The United Church. Mr. Nishihara is assistant pastor of Shimanouchi Church, Osaka. They will spend four months in the program of Joint Response to the Crisis in the Nation, sponsored by the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of The United Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.

In his letter to Moderator Masahisa Suzuki of The United Church of Christ in Japan asking for help, John Coventry Smith, newly elected Moderator of the United Presbyterian Church, said, "In planning this urgent work, our Board of National Missions has recognized the great contribution that can be made by Christians from other lands. To our church people they would bring a fuller perspective and new dimension of understanding." He explained that approximately 50 fraternal workers and staff members and 25 nationals from overseas would be working in white suburban communities and in black communities, in close relationship with the metropolitan presbyteries and synods.

It is anticipated that several Presbyterian fraternal workers now assigned to Japan will also be asked to return for the program, which will be carried on through a series of four-month sessions, the first beginning June 11.

DELEGATES PREPARE FOR UPPSALA

Japanese delegates who will attend the Fourth World Council of Churches' Assembly at Uppsala, Sweden, July 4-19, are Shiro Abe, member of the WCC Central Committee; Rev. L. Stanley Manierre, Associate General Secretary of NCC; Matthew S. Ogawa, member of WCC Information Committee; Rev. Masahisa Suzuki, Moderator, United Church of Christ in Japan; Rev. Jo Yamada, Director, Administrative Board, Episcopal Church of Japan; Nobuyuki Yamashita, youth delegate, an insurance company employee. Bishop Nicolai Dairoku Sayama, Japan Orthodox Church, will attend as a member of the Moscow Patriarchate delegation of the Russian Greek Orthodox Church.

Dr. Kiyoko Takeda Cho, Dean of the College, International Christian University, will serve on the panel for the opening evening program. Several other persons from Japan are attending as observers.

NORTH AMERICAN PASTORS COME FOR SUMMER MISSION

Thirteen pastors and their families will arrive in Tokyo Thursday, June 20, for a month-long program of Ecumenical Mission in the Tohoku area of northern Honshu. Host is the Tohoku district of The United Church of Christ in Japan. Rev. Yoshihide Sakurai is chairman of the 1968 Ecumenical Mission committee, Rev. Jun Ehara, secretary.

This year's team, led by Rev. Franklin J. Hinkamp, includes several families with children. Participants come from the Reformed Church of America, Disciples of Christ, United Church of Christ, United Church of Canada, United Methodist Church and United Presbyterian Church.

The program is a continuation of the summer evangelistic missions brought to Japan for ten years after the war by Rev. Lawrence Lacour and carried on, more recently, under the name, L-Way Evangelism. Each member of the team will be assigned to work with a pastor in scattered locations in the Tohoku. During the final week, Japanese pastors and American visitors will be joined by Taiwanese and Korean pastors from the Tsurukawa Rural Institute, Tokyo, for a week of fellowship and discussion of Asian problems.

JAPAN LUTHERAN CHURCH ASSUMES SELF-GOVERNMENT

Lay and clergy delegates from congregations of the Japan Lutheran Church took the final steps leading to self-government at the General Conference of the 2,727 member-Japan Mission of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod held in early May. The new status will become effective January 1, 1969.

Rev. Kosaku Nao, 60, professor of Old Testament at the Theological School of the Japan Lutheran Church, was elected President of the new church. Elected Vice President was Rev. Yoichi Imanari, pastor, Lutheran Church of Totsuka. The secretary is Rev. Yoshikatsu Sato, pastor, Kugenuma Lutheran Church. Called to be new administrative director is Rev. Kuraji Yoshikawa, Sapporo. Previously the governing body of the church has been the Missionary Conference of the church comprised of American missionaries and Japanese clergy.

Thoroughly debated, as the churchmen drew up the new constitution, was the question of whether the Japan Lutheran Church was to be considered a "church" or a "federation of congregations." Stressing the unity of the one church of Christ, in the preamble to the Constitution, the conference voted to describe the new organization of the congregations of the Japan Lutheran Church as a church body basing its authority on a delegate conference of clergy and lay representatives of the member congregations. A general conference will be held every two years. The Japanese name, Nippon Ruteru Kyodan, will be retained for the new church, the official English name to be the "Japan Lutheran Church."

Besides pledging itself to the three historic creeds of the church and the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the conference adopted a statement on the Scriptures which stressed the dynamic function of the Bible as able to instruct for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Greetings were brought to the conference by Rev. Toshiaki Utsumi, the newly elected President of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, Japan's oldest and largest Lutheran body. The work of the Japan Mission of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, was started 20 years ago. Both churches are in pulpit and altar fellowship and work closely together in various programs.

Fearing possible violation of the Japanese Constitution article on the freedom of religion, the conference deplored efforts by the Liberal Democratic Party to nationalize Yasukuni Shrine.

In a letter to members of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, in America, the conference expressed its grief at the tragedy of Dr. King's death and its conviction that the gospel of the cross of Christ is for the salvation of all men regardless of race or citizenship and makes all men brothers and sisters.

JAPAN-KOREA LABOR SEMINAR PLANS AWAITS VISA APPROVALS

Seeking to promote reconciliation and fellowship between Korean and Japanese youth, the NCC Youth Committee has planned a month-long labor seminar, in addition to the usual summer work camp and labor seminar.

Plans call for the participants--about fifteen young persons from Korea and Japan--to live and work in small industries in the East End of Tokyo, where there are many small factories. At the same time, they will attend evening and week-end lectures and discussions on the economic structure of Asian society and on their responsibility as Christians in it. At the present time, Korean participants are awaiting visa approval.

CATHEDRAL RESOUNDS IN ECUMENICAL FESTIVAL

St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral in Tokyo rang with the choir music of four Christian traditions in the first Ecumenical Musical Festival held Sunday afternoon, June 9. One hundred fifty persons sang in the Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran and United Church choirs, each of whom performed a group of selections. The Festival, Japanese in mood and manner, drew a crowd of 2,400.

To demonstrate Christian unity-in-diversity, each choir gave its particular rendition of the Agnus Dei. The Catholic choir sang a series of responses with text by Kikuo Takano and music composed by Saburo Takada. The concert drew upon two organs--the grand organ of the Cathedral and a small pipe organ constructed by Japan's first career organ-builder, Hiroshi Tsuji.

The purpose of the festival, sponsored by a committee of members from the four participating churches, was three-fold: "to become acquainted with each other's church music, to foster fellowship between the churches, and to stimulate the creation of Japanese church music to appeal to Japanese religious feelings and musical sensitivity."

REUNION

The NCC office welcomes many visitors from abroad. Among recent guests have been a pastor interested in lay training, a seminary president from India, the EACC secretary for Laity and Christian Education, and two research Workers on the China Program for the NCCC-USA. Each person has undoubtedly had special surprises and impressions.

For Dr. Carl Lindholm, a Presbyterian fraternal worker who has served in China and India, the visit brought an unusual measure of surprise and joy, for it made possibly a reunion with Japanese friends with whom he had worked while a prisoner in the Philippines during World War II. Dr. Lindholm had been placed in a prisoner-of-war camp when the Japanese Army occupied the area. Later, he was granted permission to work among the churches. Eventually he became acquainted with some Japanese pastors and Christians who had been drafted and who were working in the Religious Section.

Asking about these Japanese friends when he met with Japanese church leaders at the Christian Center on May 21st, Dr. Lindholm found that most of them had been able to return home after the war and are now working as seminary professors, pastors and educators. The youngest one of the group, who was a student at that time, now 25 years later, is a middle-aged Christian business man who came to the NCC office to meet Dr. Lindholm.

"I realize that these Christians tried to do their best in a difficult situation," said Dr. Lindholm. "That is why I still remember our fellowship with warm appreciation."

SUMMER CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON BASICS IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The annual summer conference of the NCC Christian Education Department will be held at the Hotel New Hoshino, Karuizawa, June 23-26. Speaking on the topic, "The Basics of Christian Education," will be Dr. Tadao Aiura, Kwansei Gakuin University Theological Seminary; Dr. Jun Ojima, St. Paul's University, and Mrs. Kazuko Suzuki, instructor, St. Paul's University. The sessions will include various areas of Christian education--worship, age groupings for pre-school through adult, curriculum, Christian home and family.

Applications should be sent to the Christian Education Department, NCC, by July 15. The total fee is ¥7,500.

GENERATION GAP WITHIN MINORITIES IS DISCUSSION TOPIC

The NCC Committee on Minority Groups will meet at 7:00 p.m. June 20, at the Tokyo Korean Christian Church, Wakamiyacho, Shinjuku, to hear pastors and lay leaders from several Korean churches speak on the generation gap. The committee is composed of Japanese and Korean pastors and laymen active in politics and law.

DR. OMURA REPORTS MOSCOW IMPRESSIONS

Dr. Isamu Omura, chairman of NCC, who returned June 5 after attending the Fiftieth Anniversary celebrations of the Patriarchate of Moscow, said, "The sincere, faithful attitude of the people who attend the worship services in the various churches quite impressed me. The worshippers remain standing during the three-hour service, and when it is finished they rush to kiss the Patriarch's ring. This made me believe that the tradition of the Orthodox Churches in Russia still lives in the lives of its people."

AFSC INTERNATIONAL WORK CAMP WILL HELP EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

The American Friends Service Committee announces that the 1968 AFSC International Work Camp will be held in Shitogishi Village in Gonohe Town, Aomori Prefecture. Of the 300 residents of the village, 4 were killed and several injured, 63 houses were destroyed and 68 damaged, and the villagers' livelihood was threatened by masses of soil and debris that buried the fields.

The work camp is open to young people ages 20 to 30 who have good spoken English. Twenty foreign participants from 10 countries will join 15 Japanese.

The AFSC is also sponsoring a work camp in Korea from August 1-23. The cost is \$20.00 plus travel expenses. Persons interested in either camp should contact Richard and Rose Lewis, Directors, International Work Camps in East Asia, 12-7 4-chome, Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Tel. 473-0472, immediately.

UNIQUE THEATER PERFORMANCE BENEFITS AGAPE

"Kirinonoka"--In the Mist--being performed as a benefit for The Agape Center, a factory employing physically handicapped persons, presents a traditional Japanese novel in the idiom of modern drama.

The NCC Department of Interchurch Aid and Service, which sponsors Agape, is selling tickets for benefit performances on June 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24. They are available at ¥1,000 each at the IAS office, Bible House, Ginza, Tokyo.

The play, which opens at Nikkei Hall, Tokyo, June 15, features the life of a kenshi--Japanese swordsman--from the Meiji Restoration to World War II. The Keyaki Group is performing Masakazu Yamazaki's modern drama version of the novel, which established the reputation of Author Torahiko Tamiya.